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THE COMING MAN.

BY S. V. CLEVENGER.

SANCHO PANZA remarked that men were as God made them, and sometimes a great deal worse. But it is becoming known that the world is really improving; that a line touching the dark ages and passing through our present imperfect civilization may be produced indefinitely, in imagination, toward better things. So Sancho's horizon was cramped, and we may now believe that man in general is better than he was born,

Of course "perfection" in anything is unattainable, and discussion of the "perfect man" could only be carried to any sort of a conclusion by, first of all, recognizing that there cannot be such a creation, for the very conception involves contradictions. Herbert Spencer has ably gone over this and kindred subjects in showing that everything is relative, and that no matter what advances may be made, others are still possible. Equilibrium means death, a cessation of inter- and counter-action. "Perfection" is inconceivable, and the ignorant, who imagine they can conceive it, may be convinced that their ideal was a frightful hobgoblin after all.

Picture to yourself what the African, the American Indian, or the primitive people of any country, would regard as the perfect man, and compare their wild and, in the main, hideous conceptions with those of "civilized" men,—particularly that portion to whom thought is an effort. But as the science of comparative mythology plainly shows that deification is this same process; that gods were always big men; anthropomorphism, from which no one can completely free himself, runs rampant through our ideas of any sort of superiority, whether of this world or another, The Joves, Wodins, Thors, Brahmas were muscular and sometimes noisy, and some early races allotted many legs and arms or other parts to their gods; or, as in an Egyptian instance, conferred extraordinary length of arms, as symbolizing great power

And in this *powerfulness* we have the general underlying agreement as to, at least, what is accomplished by "perfection."

This apparently indirect manner of approach to our subject enables us to save time by clearing up in our minds what we mean, and do not mean, when we speak of the perfect man, or his approximation, *the better man*. And still we are driven to narrower ground by recollecting that John L. Sullivan might have an opinion on this topic differing somewhat from that of Oliver Wendell Holmes and other essayists.

We are asked: "What qualities are most essential for the perfecting of a human being? What are the cardinal points to be insisted upon for the all-round development of the coming man?"

The modern scientific method of finding an answer would compel us to take another ramble over creation, for man is part of the universe, and cannot be fairly considered apart therefrom, though we may avoid unnecessary discursiveness in the endeavor.

Looking at the worst phase first, in all ages man has been a sorry sort of brute, with animal propensities, desires, passions; and, as Buckle has fully shown, his civilization has been a growth from feuds, follies, conquests, individual and tribal selfishness and rapacity; but with increase of intelligence a respect for the rights of others came about, because man recognized that he best conserved his selfish interests by mutual regard. Self-protection was assured by family protection, and both these by tribal protection, and it is dawning upon the world that national barriers must eventually give way to the universality of interests; nor is the heterogeneity of the "brotherhood of man," with diversity of aims, ideas, capabilities, and needs, any greater, comparatively, to-day, between races, than it was ages ago between many individuals of the same tribe.

Altruism is the highest egoism, and is developed from it. In plain words, as Darwin expressed it, club law instituted morality in savage tribes. This club law, and the fear of it, led to an habitual regard for the method of avoiding its enforcement, and it became folly to be other than virtuous under such circumstances.

Knight errantry, the duello, and finally, in these days, suits at

law, with occasional relapses into the older methods of adjustment, afforded object lessons in expediency which sages and patriarchs dwelt upon to the inexperienced.

The history of the world includes the evolution from lower to higher expediency ideals. Disregard for the rights of others was a means by which our savage ancestors sought to prolong life and secure enjoyment. With less of this brutality, but nevertheless with plenty of suffering abounding through his thoughtlessness and his inability to curb his passions, the barbarian is an improvement upon the savage in this matter of expediency ideals. His love of ornamentation, luxuriance, and similar childish traits cause his actions to be merely an exaggeration of what we find to-day in civilized society. "Civilized" nations are but barbarians masquerading in the apparel afforded them by a development of the arts and sciences beyond their deserts. The earrings, the bustles, the tight lacing, the artificialities generally, the worship of wealth, the indifference as to how one may have acquired money, the abandonment to pleasure procuring, sight-seeing in and avoidance of scenes of suffering and squalor, the social vanities and dissipations, prove that the masses, rich and poor alike, divested of the tinsel afforded them by the fair devotees of science and art, might as readily be Turks or Hottentots.

Vulgar expediency ideals pervade our popular novels. The getting of wealth, the capturing of beauty, the utter want of a worthy aim in life prevail, and the success of authors who pander to this taste is a measure of what the purchasers of these books appreciate.

The right does not change, but our ideas of right do. Hero worship is dying out, and principles, not men, receive more deference. The race has had to make this advance through bitter experience, constant disappointments, disillusion, the shattering of idols, the growth of knowledge. Religion, with its hopes and fears, its system of rewards and punishments, notwithstanding these were "other worldly," became stimuli to good and deterrents from evil. The bare fact that some would act consistently with belief that there was a life after death, where he would suffer pain or pleasure according to what he had done in

this world, shows that the believer was guided by expediency, but truly of a higher kind. Surely the conventional ideas of right and wrong, even in this day, make a grand mess. The biases are innumerable that are created by rank, caste, prejudice, relative degrees of ignorance and intelligence, training, education, and nationality. A single instance can be cited: the term "morganatic," which is a wink at the license of royalty. "The king can do no wrong." Princes may be debauchees, drunkards, vicious, but they are defended, and their most public outrages are denied or condoned. Even dictionaries smile complacently at the villiany of nobles by giving a definition that does not include all that is known to be the meaning of the word morganatic.

However much we may assert to the contrary, and even though upon reflection we acknowledge to ourselves that wealth and good looks should not be measures of respectability, the childish trait is universally prevalent, even among civilized adults, that the good looking man, the well-dressed man, the wealthy man, is alone the good man. Poverty is regarded as evidence of punishment for wickedness. The every act of the bulk of mankind proclaim this to be a deep-rooted belief.

But surely there is a conscience, private and public, that works for final good. Undoubtedly. But we can understand that conscience, and its peculiarities and well-known inconsistencies, if we can bring ourselves to calmly inspect its origin in the law that *the altered or acquired habits of one set of ancestors may greatly affect the conduct of their descendants*. For instance, A is a murderer and freebooter, living many centuries ago, when to be otherwise was scarcely the rule. His surroundings and associations made him such. His child, B, at a later time and under better influences, is taught a disrelish for his parents' pastimes, but could easily relapse, as the inherited instincts were strong within him.

The good influence is kept up, however, and the grandchild, C, does not murder or plunder, because he has inherited a corrected disposition, which is intensified by the circumstances under which he lives. The great grandchild, D, by persistence of these conditions, would as surely be benefited by the inheritance for good

as he was likely to resemble his progenitors in feature or form. He has a ready-made conscience, for which he is not at all responsible, and deserves no credit. It might be so acute as to cause him to die of remorse, were he betrayed into wrongdoing.

Having reached this *negative* plane of mere respectability, D and his successors may develop some *positive* good trait, the habitual practice of which may become second nature. The feudal lord of A's time found happiness only in the desolation of others; F and G, his philosophical descendants, like Sir Titus Salt, grieve if they cannot find some means of doing lasting good to humanity, and yet from A to X, Y, and Z, expediency governs all of them.

One finds it most expedient to obey the promptings of his conscience, and derives comfort only from so doing. The keeping alive of that "celestial spark" may be to him more valuable than all the possessions of the world; while another, with none of this "spark" to speak of, or who may have had it developed in some other direction, kicks the beggar who annoys him, and laughs with pleasure when he recollects the event. The philanthropist feels a heart glow in remembering how he has relieved some one in distress or has contributed to some reform movement.

Different influences for good brought to bear upon successive generations are sure to appear in the last generation in a radical change of character from that of the remote ancestor, making it as impossible for X to do an evil deed deliberately as it was for A to do anything else. So you see that expediency, the doing of that from which we expect to draw the most comfort, is the controlling spirit of action in all.

The world's history shows that people became better only through intelligence; that this made it possible for them to adopt higher expediency planes; by regard for the rights of others each found his own rights best conserved. Nor did mankind, until the habit was instituted, do right from any other motive than that of mere convenience. The highest efflorescence of this natural law, beginning with the club, will be in the appearance of a highly developed altruism in a later age. Social maladies, poverty, and unhappiness will not be allowed to exist, upon the

principle, but recently discovered, that the presence of a degraded race devolves the degradation of neighboring races.

The structure of the brain itself shows that expediency regard is intellect; the nervous system plainly rules bodily parts. In higher and still higher grades of intelligence the connecting strands of the brain, the countless tangles of telegraph lines that inter-relate these parts, are more complex and numerous; and the main distinction between the idiot and one who is mentally sound is that the latter, by the integrity of his mental mechanism, is able to better adjust his inner to his outer relations. He is more in keeping with his surroundings. So goodness is a form of wisdom, after all. Habit and conscience make it possible for us to do right for right's sake, but habit and conscience are the product of your environment and what you have inherited. Conscience causes the right thing to be automatically performed. You do instinctively, and perforce, what before required a motive, just as the engineer can manage his machine in the dark and without thought, but when he was learning to do so his every sense must be alert. This view explains the inconsistencies of our nature; morality is but intellect, and no intellect is completely symmetrical. Ideas of propriety vary within wide limits. Disease may degrade mind in one way in one patient, and in other ways in other patients, depending upon the resistive strength of inherited traits, and what has been inherited.

And this brings us to a consideration of the old saw, "*mens sana*," etc., from the anthropological or physical point of view. A superficial consideration would suggest that mind and body must be developed symmetrically to accomplish the best results, but while this may hold good for mediocrity in both, which is nature's method of averaging things, we can readily see that athletes, gymnasts, pugilists unduly nourish and train their muscles at the expense of their brains, and that book-worms and thinkers generally incline to too much passivity physically. The world has reaped advantage from its diseased and bodily imperfect Gibbon, Tom Hood, Walter Scott, Sam Johnson, and Byron, though in different measures, and from imperfect temperaments such as Bacon, Coleridge, Dean Swift, De Quincy. But we should only

consider their defects as their misfortunes, and not the cause of their literary bents, for mental deformity has among potentates been the cause of untold suffering to nations. Neither physical nor mental perfection (if we can grant that such things existed) seem to have assured lasting integrity to either body or mind. The Spartans as a race do not appear to have been the fittest to survive, and during certain epochs in European history the man who dared to think at all could with difficulty keep his head on his shoulders.

But we must not lose sight of the fact that the world has profited more by the individual labors of men and women whose intellectual greatness was coupled with such extreme modesty that, while in quiet ways their power for good was incalculable, they never cared to take credit for it. "Full many a flower," etc., as Cowper has it.

As good machinery may, other things being equal, be expected to do good work, or better than imperfect machinery, a certain amount of good health is requisite for the accomplishment of any ordinary life-work.

Then there must be suitable consideration of the fact that were society built upon the principle of the "One-Hoss Shay," the wheels could not do the work of the thills, and so on, but each part could do its perfect work only by reason of the radical perfection of differences. So we are forced to regard the "perfect man" as one who is suited to his particular place and environment; and as development is only possible to its fullest extent when environment, opportunity, and ability are favorable, we will have to suppose a case to which the following applies:

1. Excellent physical and mental heredity has barred out the chances of consumption, insanity, liquor addiction, criminality, decrepitude, or ugliness.

2. As "every child has the right to be well born," so he has the right to good training, and our typical better man can only come from better folk with the right ideas of nurture.

3. This entails having not too many in the family, for the lower the race the more prolific; and highest culture is possible only, as a rule, where time can be devoted to the rearing and instruction of a few children.

4. The parents should have the direct supervision of the child's care, for among the very wealthy and the very poor neglect of children is too often the rule, and there is nothing in the world that can take the place of parental, especially motherly, love and care.

5. Circumstances do not permit one to develop as he will, or should; and as poverty produces thoughtfulness, thrift, and sympathy, and a better understanding of our neighbors' needs and characters, he who is unfortunate enough to be born wealthy should be brought into closer contact with the "other half" of the world.

6. As accomplishing something in the world is the only measure of adaptability, the means for such accomplishment should be sought, but not at the sacrifice of conscience,—whether acquired or ready made by ancestors.

7. He should be a man of fair size, because every one is inclined to discredit the possibility of a small man doing big things. Measure up your own list of heroes. Large-sized men are for this reason apt to be overestimated, just as titled individuals are who accomplish anything. Was it Huxley who said that Argyle was very smart—for a duke?

8. The *proper* regard for his individual interests will entail a genuine altruism which will make him not only a patriot (not of the demagogue kind) but a lover of liberty for the world. Kosciusco, Kossuth, Washington, Fayette, Garibaldi actively interested themselves in universal freedom when their own countries could spare their attention.

9. He could with great advantage be an American, for in America truth is left free to combat error; and no tyranny can be enduring under such auspices.

10. His education should be with regard to Herbert Spencer's idea that, first and foremost, that knowledge should be acquired which is of most practical worth to the individual, and that the ornamental should have last consideration. Overdoses of classical verbiage and minute details of the intrigues of courtiers would thus give place to physics and chemistry, which are of more account in this work-a-day world.

11. The cultivation of self-control, in the recognition that man is his own worst enemy.

12. Other desirabilities may be subclassed under the preceding.

In a general way, and when aberrant types are excluded, the increase of the facial angle of Camper in the evolutionary scale has a value as an index to what nature does to increase intelligence. It is a very superficial physiognomical means of estimation, however, if associated matters are not properly considered at the same time, for the skull-growth may not keep pace always with brain-growth, in individuals or races, and complexity of convolutions may result to fold into smaller space the same amount of brain surface that may also be found with fewer convolutions in a larger, or more roomy, skull.

It is the multiplicity and complexity of the nerve-strands in the brain that causes intelligence, and these are developed by proper exercise and education of the senses in relation to the finer muscular movements. The learning of something to do that will benefit the world as well as self, and deep thinking thereon, and endeavoring to understand the universe, as far as possible, is best calculated to develop the brain most symmetrically, repress the evil and bring out all the good of which the highest type of man is capable, for goodness is but a high order of intelligence, notwithstanding its occasional absence in intellects otherwise highly developed, and its frequent presence among those whose minds are defective in other directions.